Digital Inclusion
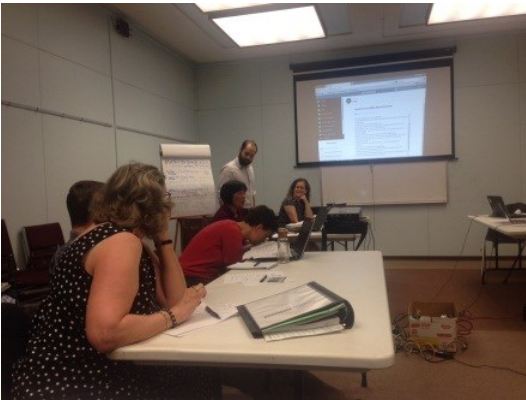## City of Austin

District 6

Relevancy & Advocacy Report

Digital Inclusion
City of Austin

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Statement of Purpose: Serving the Community

The 2014 Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan lays out the City Council's resolution calling for a roadmap that addresses access and adoption of digital technology within Austin. The foundation of the Austin Digital Inclusion Strategy is an evolving set of Taking Action: Initiatives centered on objectives that can help overcome identified challenges. The Digital Inclusion Strategy is based upon the outcomes of the Austin Digital Assessment, a residential technology usage study conducted every three years, that evaluates and assesses residents' access to technology resources and literacy and training programs.

The Austin Digital Inclusion Strategy highlights five broad initiatives that together will realize Austin's vision for digital inclusion. Three of these are foundational strategies that enable Austin's residents and relevant sectors to be digitally-connected and engaged. Two growth strategies build on this foundation of technological strength to ensure coordinated service delivery. Together, these five initiatives provide the path to ensure every Austin resident has an opportunity to be fully engaged in digital society.

Connect: The City and its partners in digital inclusion should embrace technological innovation to help connect residents to programs and services.

Engage: The City and its partners recognize ongoing community engagement is essential to emphasize the importance of having everyone connected.

Include: The City and its partners endeavor to enhance the ability of digital inclusion program providers to serve local residents, and explore new ways of advancing digital inclusion directly to residents.

Integrate: The City should work with its partners to integrate the Digital Inclusion Strategy with community planning initiatives across all sectors.

Coordinate: To coordinate these efforts and increase the scale of digital inclusion initiatives, the City and its partners should raise additional funds and plan for efficient implementation of important programs and services.

The Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan's 25 initiatives will drive many specific benefits for Austin, city residents, and engaged sectors. These benefits fall into six goal areas, which are displayed throughout the Plan to indicate progress on the digital inclusion indicators.

| Goals	2014 Baseline Indicators
To Understand and Increase Usage of Digital and Communications Technology	8% of adults do not use the Internet on any device
To Address Potential Barriers to Digital Inclusion	Relevancy is a barrier to non-users; 40% are not interested in using the Internet
To Understand the Need for Digital Literacy Training	42% of non-users would need someone to help them to get online
To Understand the Need for Access via Reliable & Affordable Devices	Nearly all adults own cell phones, and 83% own smart phones
To Understand the Need for Language & Disability Accommodations	1 in 4 non-users feel they do not speak English well enough to use the Internet
To Develop Relevancy & Advocacy Campaigns Within Specific Communities & Populations	Internet non-users primarily live in Southeast Austin

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## Digital Inclusion in Austin's District 6

Austin residents demonstrate every day what amazing and creative possibilities can come from creating and using digital and communications technology. But 55,000 adult residents living in our city today are disconnected from this increasingly connected world, with most living in underserved communities.

Vision for Digital Inclusion

The City of Austin's vision is for every resident to have access to the knowledge and resources needed to participate in our emerging digital society. We need affordable and available devices for all residents. And it is critical that all Austinites understand technology and its relevancy to their daily lives, whether for helping with their kids' homework, looking for jobs, getting access to health information, or accessing online government information.
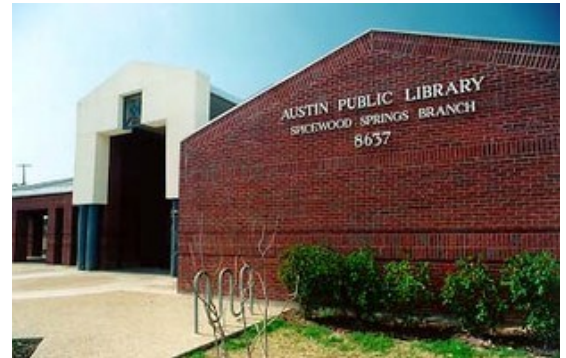
Spicewood Springs Branch Library is a District 6 institution where residents can build digital and educational skills through publicly available computers.

District 6 Technology Landscape

Legend: District 6, City of Austin, United States
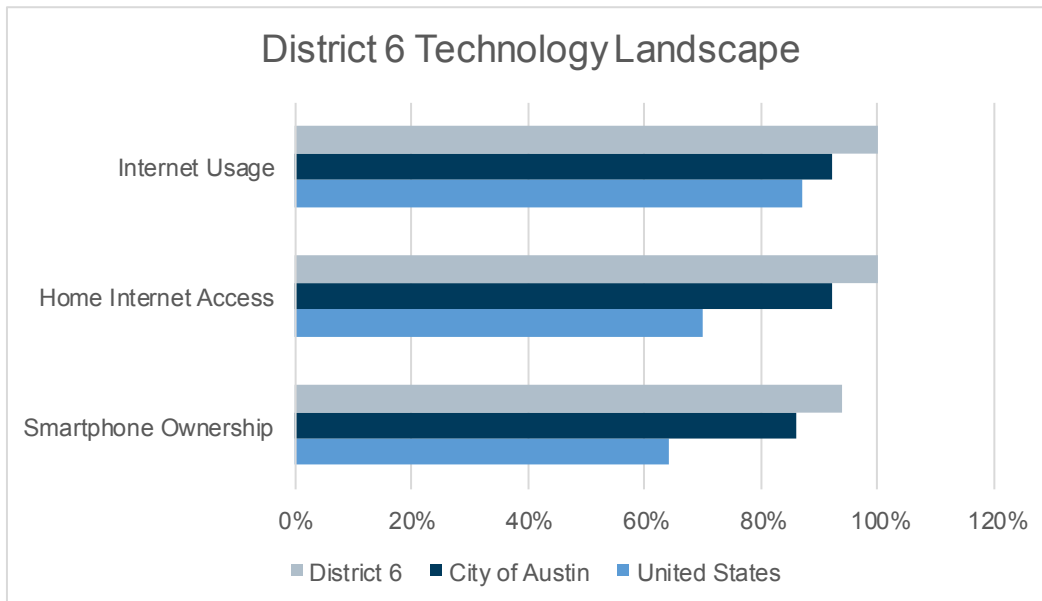
District 6 Overview

In West Austin, District 6 is home to some of Austin's most desirable and wealthy neighborhoods. District 6 includes several educational institutions like Westwood High School in Round Rock Independent School District, Concordia University, and Spicewood Springs Branch Library. Austin benefits from having greater access to and knowledge of technology, and it exceeds the national average in Internet usage, home Internet access, and smartphone ownership. District 6 is one of Austin's most digitally engaged communities, with nearly universal Internet usage and home Internet access. Residents of District 6 are digitally and economically empowered, and can be a resource for digital inclusion in the rest of Austin through engagement and volunteerism.
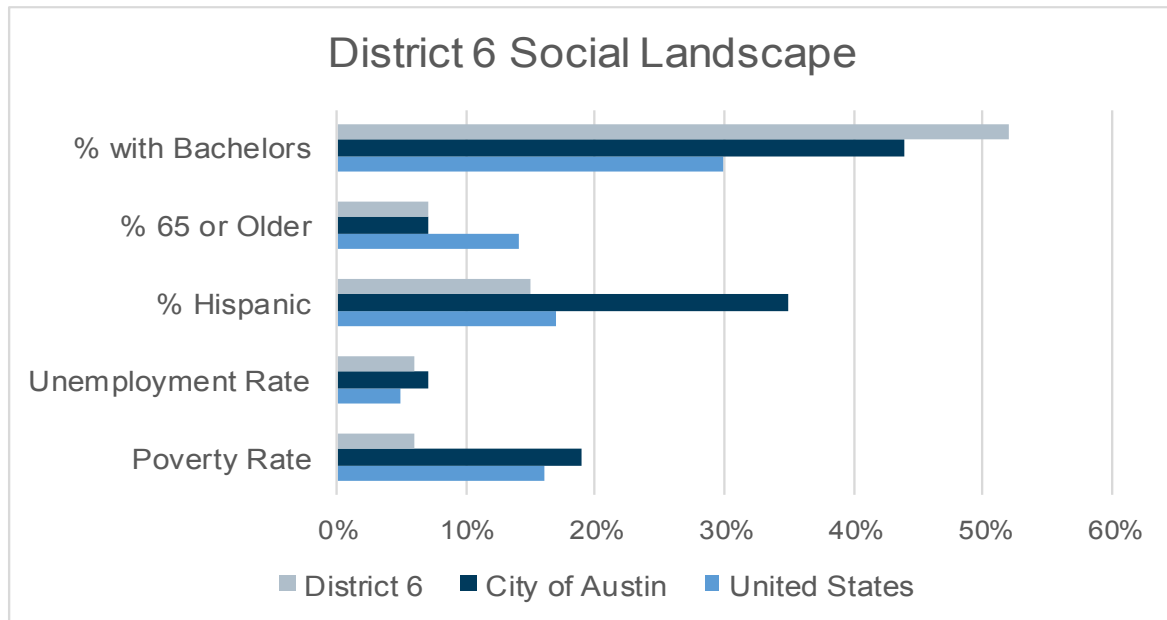
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District 6 Barriers to Using the Internet and Social Landscape

District 6 Social Landscape

Categories (top to bottom): % with Bachelors, % 65 or Older, % Hispanic, Unemployment Rate, Poverty Rate

Legend: District 6, City of Austin, United States

X-axis: 0% to 60%

Internet Usage Trends

In a City of Austin / UT survey conducted in 2014, all of District 6 residents identifies as Internet users. This is much higher technology usage than the citywide average of 92 percent. District 6 also has universal home Internet access, compared to 92 percent home access citywide. 94 percent of District 6 residents own smartphones compared to 86 percent citywide.

Median Income

District 6, City of Austin, United States

X-axis: $0, $25,000, $50,000, $75,000, $100,000
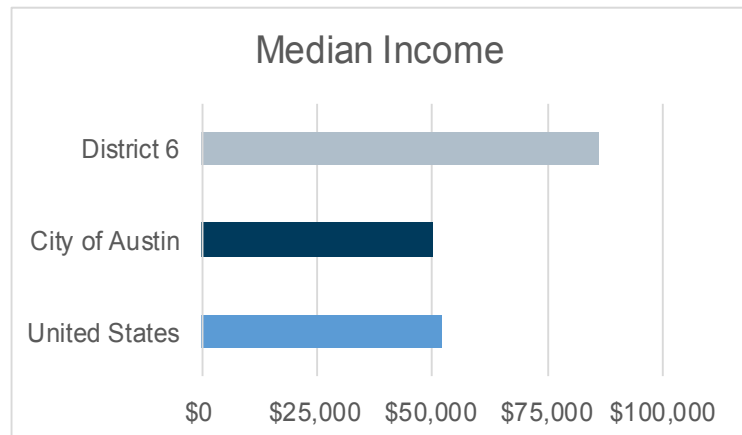
Social Landscape

Certain social factors may contribute to District 6's high levels of digital access and understanding. More than half (52 percent) of District 6 residents have a Bachelor's Degree or higher, which is higher than the citywide average of 44 percent. The median income in District 6 outpaces the citywide median by more than $35,000. Poverty and unemployment in District 6 are also lower than citywide averages. Many programs in Austin are dedicated to teaching residents how to use technology and the Internet to improve their quality of life through financial management, educational resources, finding low-cost transportation options, and more. These programs need volunteer and financial support from Austin's more advantaged residents to ensure that all Austinites have an opportunity to participate in our digital engaged society.

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Digital Inclusion Partners & Resources in District 6

Residents receive computer training at an Austin Free-Net computer lab in the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless in downtown Austin.

Digital Inclusion Community Partners

Austin is fortunate to have a robust system of nonprofit, community and City organizations committed to digital inclusion. The City has a long history of supporting front-line programs that help residents overcome technological barriers. Austin Free-Net is a City-funded nonprofit that provides free training throughout the city, and relies on community volunteers to facilitate public access and one-on-one training. All of Austin Public Libraries have computers available for public use, and these are key facilities for public access in Austin. The City's Digital Inclusion Community Engagement Strategy involves working with neighborhood and community associations and to connect with residents with technology resources.

Competitive Broadband Marketplace

Austin also benefits from a competitive broadband market represented by four Internet providers: AT&T, Google Fiber, Grande Communications and Time Warner Cable. All four providers contribute to ensuring Austin residents, businesses and organizations have access to reliable and affordable Internet. Google Fiber partnered with the City of Austin for the Community Connections Program to award 100 nonprofit and public facilities a free gigabit-speed Internet connection to spark social innovation. District 6 will be home to three Community Connection sites including a high school, a library, and an institution of higher education.

Representatives from Texas Time Warner Cable, Google Fiber, Grande Communications and AT&T speaking at Austin's Broadband Providers Forum about how they connect Austin.

Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

The City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan calls on the City to leverage these community assets to promote digital inclusion in Austin. Digital engaged residents can be a major asset to advance digital inclusion in the rest of Austin. We can work together through public awareness, volunteerism and donating to support programs that help all residents in need build digital skills to improve education, job preparedness, health resources, social connections and more.

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District 6 Community Assets

Public Access Computer Labs

Public Access was identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in the International City/County Management Association's *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Public Access* and other principles have been integrated into the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan as guiding elements around which the City and its partners should dedicate programmatic time, resources, strategic development and more. Ensuring that all residents have access to safe and reliable spaces for digital access is a top priority for Austin's digital inclusion strategy.

Community Connections

Availability was also identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Availability* of affordable, high-speed Internet and devices is an essential component of digital inclusion. *Availability* needs to become more ubiquitous both in individual households and in multi-user environments that can empower local communities to stay connected. Google Fiber partnered with the City of Austin for the Community Connections program. Community Connections awarded a free gigabit-speed Internet connection for ten years to 100 nonprofit and public facilities in fiberhoods that qualify for Google Fiber service.

Public Access Computer Labs and Computer Training Facilities	
Spicewood Springs Library *8637 Spicewood Springs Rd.*	An Austin Public Library Branch with a public access computer lab.
Community Connections Sites	
Concordia University Texas *8637 Spicewood Springs Rd.*	Concordia University will use its improved connection to expand its online learning community and will have access to live streaming educational conferences.
Round Rock ISD *12400 Mellow Meadow Dr.*	Round Rock ISD will utilize Google Fiber to connect students with educational online resources and to increase their computer labs' capabilities.
Spicewood Springs Library *8637 Spicewood Springs Rd.*	The Austin Public Libraries will use Google Fiber to better accommodate bandwidth usage needs in their public access computer labs, meeting rooms, and the programs that select branches offer.

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District 6 Community Assets

Neighborhood Organizations and Associations & Planning Contact Teams

Relevance was identified as a fundamental **principle of digital inclusion** in the International City/County Management Association's *Building Digital Communities: A Framework for Action* (2011). *Relevancy* and other principles have been integrated into the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan as guiding elements around which the City and its partners should dedicate programmatic time, resources, strategic development and more. *Relevancy* is an ongoing challenge for those residents who do perceive Internet access to be an unnecessary or unaffordable luxury, as opposed to a critical utility to meet daily living needs in our increasingly digital world. Neighborhood-based groups are tuned into their residents' needs and can be great assets in communicating the importance of digital literacy.

Below are the neighborhood and planning organizations located in Council District 6. Each of these are important to engage with in order to develop a grassroots campaign. These community leaders are our connections to the communities.

Neighborhood Associations and Organizations & Planning Contact Teams			
Davis Spring HOA	Avery Ranch Owners Association Inc	Estates of Brentwood	The Parke HOA
Valley Oaks and more Neighborhood Assn.	Friends of Angus Valley	Champions Forest Homeowners Assn.	Summit Oaks Neigh. Assn.
Summit Oaks Neighborhood Association	Angus Valley Area Neighborhood Association	Mesa Park Neighborhood Assn.	Indian Oaks Neighborhood Association
Long Canyon Homeowners Assn.	Comanche Trail Community Assn. (CTCA)	Hughes Park Lake Subdivision 2 Assn.	Balcones Village-Spicewood H. O. A.
Acres West Homeowners Assn.	Spicewood Estates Homeowners' Assn.	Mountain Neighborhood Association (MNA)	Spicewood at Bull Creek H.O.A.
Anderson Mill Neighborhood Assn.	The Parke at Anderson Mill	Cottages at Lake Creek Home Owners Association	Tanglewood Estates Neighborhood Assn.
Spicewood Springs Road Tunnel Coalition			

Internet Users by Council District

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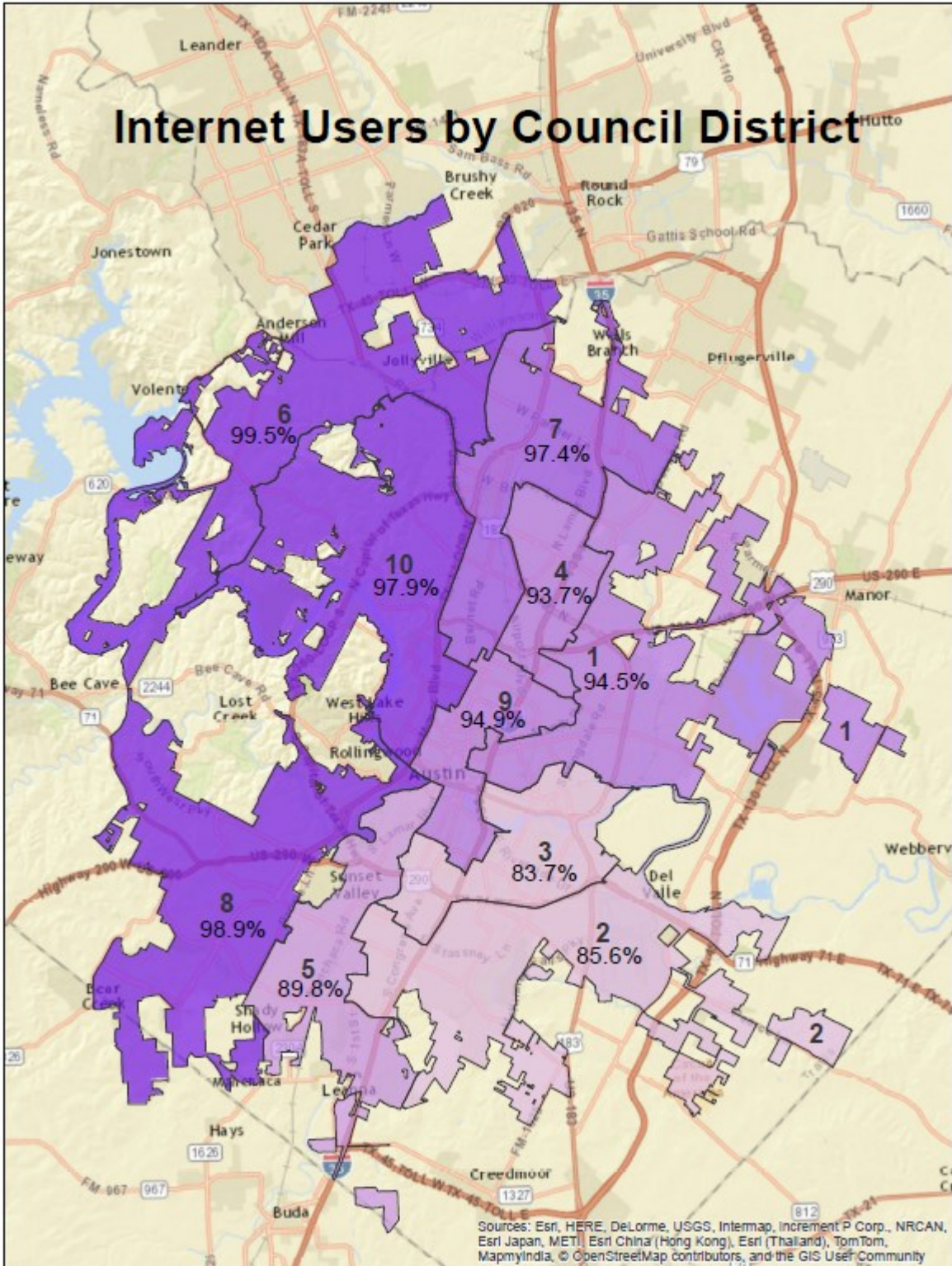
Digital Inclusion in Austin's District 6

Acknowledgements & Data Sources

Staff from the City of Austin's Digital Inclusion Program compiled this report on District 6 technology usage, challenges and assets. The City thanks its Digital Inclusion partners in this district and across the city that provide front-line serve delivery to residents in need. Please contact the Digital Inclusion program for more information or to learn about partnership opportunities at digital.inclusion@austintexas.gov or (512) 974-3510.

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